IN THE DISTANT PAST, WHEN A LARGE-SCALE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT WAS TO BE DONE, A BEAUTIFUL VIRGIN WOULD BE BURIED IN THE EARTH OR DROWNED IN THE SEA TO PRAY FOR ITS SUCCESS AND GAIN THE FAVOR OF THE GODS.
THIS ANCIENT, EVIL CUSTOM WAS KNOWN AS "THE HUMAN PILLAR."
THE LEGEND OF ONIKIRIMARU
THE LEGEND OF ONIKIRIMARU

THE LEGEND OF ONIKIRIMARU

CHAPTER 7: THE STRANGE TALE OF THE SACRIFICED MOTHER

KEI KUSUNOKI

ARE YOU SURE, OSHIZU?
SHE ANSWERED BACK IN A VOICE LIKE A BODHISATTVA.
IF THIS WILL GRANT MY WISH, THEN I WILL DO IT.
I WOULD GLADLY SACRIFICE MY LIFE FOR MY SONS' SAKE.

RRRRRRUMBLE
RUMBLE
LORD KATSU-TOYO!
THE WALLS OF THE CASTLE COLLAPSED AGAIN!
WHAT?

SHIBATA KATSUTOYO
THE NEPHEW OF SHIBATA KATSUIE. KATSUIE TRUSTED HIM GREATLY, AND ADOPTED HIM.
THIS FORTRESS IS NEEDED TO SUPPORT MY FATHER'S CASTLE, KITANOSHOU, AGAINST THE OTHER GENERALS!
AT THIS RATE WE'LL NEVER FINISH!
THE REPEATED COLLAPSE OF THE CASTLE'S WALLS WAS THREATENING THE CONSTRUCTION OF MARUOKA CASTLE.
DO YOU KNOW ANY SUITABLE VIRGINS, THEN?
WELL, SHE'S NOT A VIRGIN, BUT...
A HUMAN PILLAR, YOU SAY?
PERHAPS WE SHOULD USE A HUMAN PILLAR.

I KNOW A WIDOW NAMED OSHIZU.
SHE HAS TWO SONS, AND NO FOOD TO LIVE.
AND AN ILLNESS LEFT HER WITH ONE GOOD EYE, MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR HER TO REMARRY.
SO I CAME UP WITH A PLAN TO MAKE HER EAGERLY AGREE TO BE A HUMAN PILLAR.
INDEED, OSHIZU. LORD KATSU-TOYO HAS MADE THIS GENEROUS OFFER TO YOU.
YOU'LL MAKE BOTH OF MY SONS SAMURAI?

MOM, WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT'S A HUMAN PILLAR?
YOUR MOM IS GOING TO BECOME A GODDESS TO PROTECT THE CASTLE. SO THE LORDS OF THE CASTLE WILL RAISE YOU WITH LOVE AND CARE.
EVEN IF I CAN'T BE BY YOUR SIDE, I WILL ALWAYS WATCH OVER YOU.

SO THE ONE-EYED WIDOW WAS BURIED WITHIN THE CASTLE AS IT WAS BUILT.
VERY WELL. I ACCEPT YOUR OFFER.
BUT PLEASE ENSURE THAT BOTH OF MY SONS BECOME SAMURAI! I BEG OF YOU!
OF COURSE.
MOM!

LET US BEGIN.
NO, WAIT. IF SHE'S NOT A BEAUTIFUL VIRGIN, LET US AT LEAST BURY HER LIKE A SOKUSHINBUTSU.
YOU WOULD DO THAT TO A WOMAN WHO'S HAD NO BUDDHIST TRAINING AT ALL?
I'VE HEARD THAT THE REASON A BEAUTIFUL VIRGIN IS CHOSEN TO BE THE HUMAN PILLAR IS THAT THEY BECOME THE WIFE OF THE GOD.
SINCE WE'RE BURYING AN UGLY, ONE-EYED WIDOW INSTEAD, WE'LL NEED HER TO WORK HARDER TO EARN THE GOD'S FAVOR.
WE'RE BURYING HER ALIVE ANYWAY, RIGHT?

A SOKUSHINBUTSU IS A PERSON BURIED ALIVE IN A STONE ROOM UNDERGROUND, WHO ATTAINS ENLIGHTENMENT THROUGH CONSTANT MEDITATION.
THE CORPSE THEY LEAVE BEHIND BECOMES MUMMIFIED IN THE PROCESS.
IF ONE SUCH AS ME CAN BE OF USE TO MY LORD, I HAVE NO FEAR AT ALL.
NORMALLY YOU WOULD BUILD A STONE ROOM IN THE EARTH TO STOP THE CORPSE FROM ROTTING. BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME. A BARREL WILL DO.
WE'LL MAKE A HOLE FOR AIR AND BURY HER IN THE BARREL.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR SONS. LEAVE THEM TO ME.
I'M PLEASED TO HEAR THAT, OSHIZU.
I ENTRUST THEM TO YOU.

THAT LOOK IN HER EYES! IT'S AS IF SHE'S SAYING THAT IF I BREAK MY PROMISE, I WILL SUFFER FOR IT...
BURY HER... NOW!
SHLUMP
PLEASE, GOD...
LET MY LIFE BE OF USE TO MY SONS.
GOD...

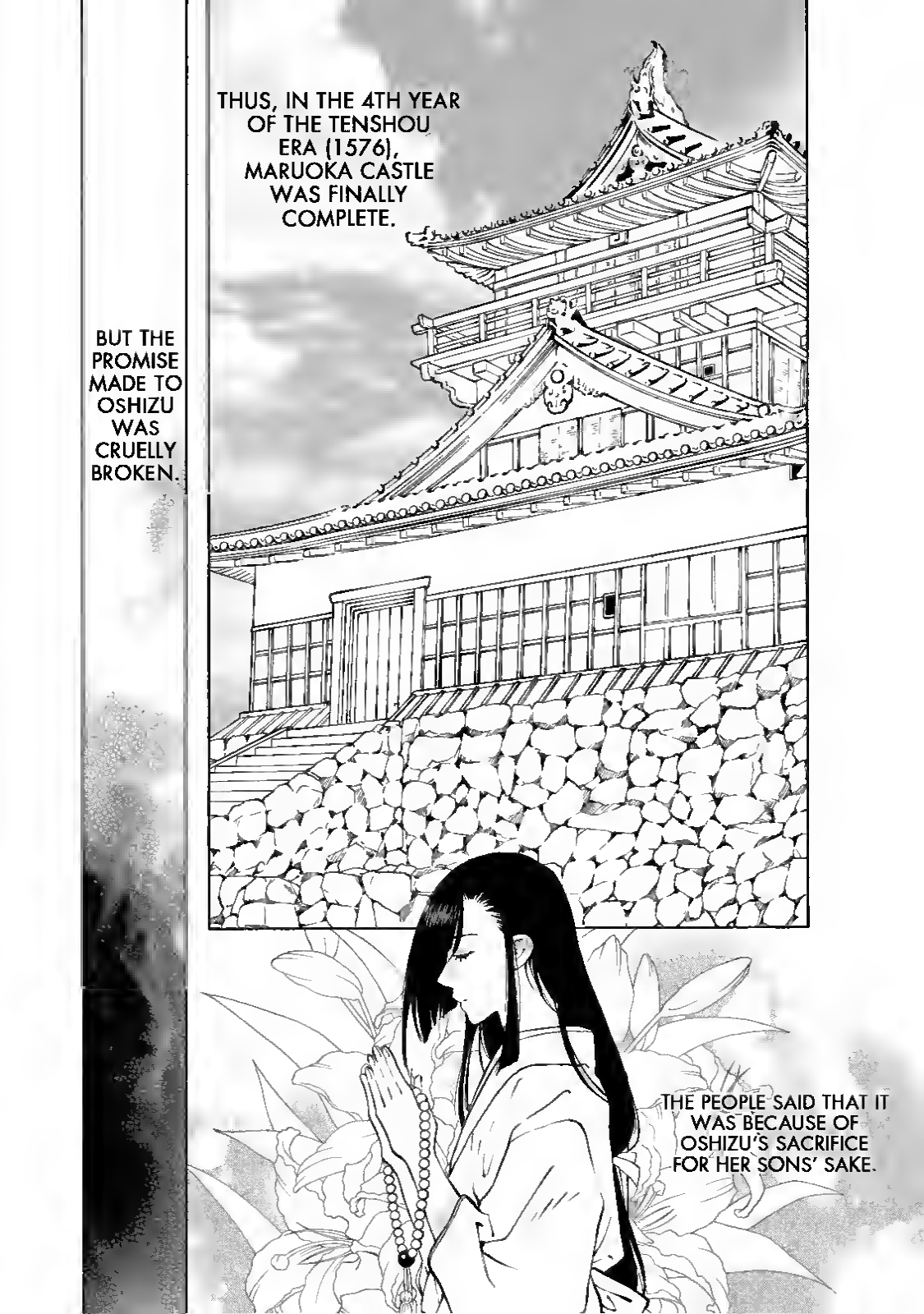
COME WITH ME! NOW! YOU WILL SERVE LORD KATSUTOYO FROM NOW ON!
WHERE DID MOMMY GO?
SHUT UP! YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL THAT YOUR MOM DID THIS SO YOU COULD LIVE!
MOMMY! MOMMY!
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE

IT WOULD'VE BEEN BETTER THAT SHE DIED QUICKLY. SHE MUST BE SUFFERING GREATLY NOW.
HOW HORRIBLE, TO SACRIFICE HER IN THE MANNER OF A SOKUSHINBUTSU...
IT IS THE ULTIMATE FORM OF SUICIDE, AND ONLY TRAINED MONKS ARE CAPABLE OF IT.
AH!
AAAH!
AAAH!
A NORMAL GIRL COULD NEVER ENDURE IT.
AAAH!
GASP
GASP
GASP

WHO'S THERE? IS SOMEONE THERE?
はっ
GASP
BEFORE YOUR SORROW AND TERROR TURN YOU INTO A DEMON...
...SHALL I BRING YOU OUT?
TURN ME INTO A DEMON?
SHALL I AIDE YOU?

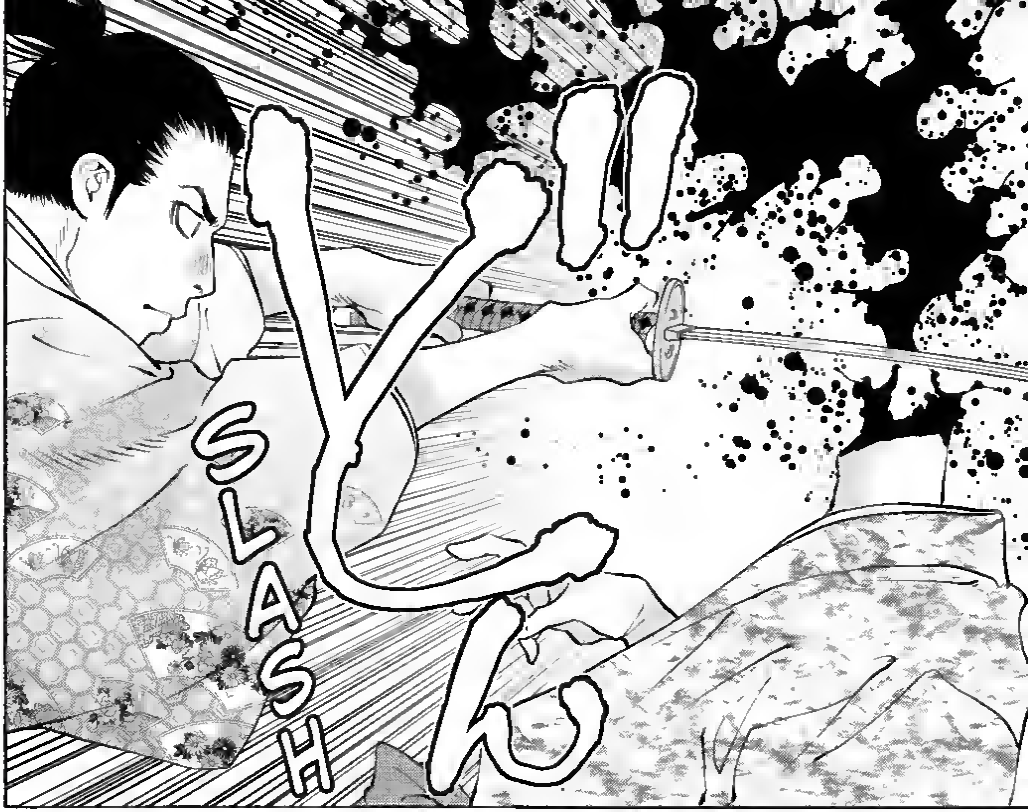
YOU'RE CERTAIN OSHIZU?
PLEASE LEAVE ME HERE. I MUST STAY HERE AND SERVE...
NO, I WILL BECOME A GOD.
I'M DOING THIS FOR MY BELOVED SONS. I WILL NEVER BECOME A DEMON.

IF THIS WILL GRANT MY WISH, THEN I WILL DO IT.
OSHIZU...
VERY WELL. PASS FROM THIS LIFE AS A MOTHER, OSHIZU.


THUS, IN THE 4TH YEAR OF THE TENSHOU ERA (1576), MARUOKA CASTLE WAS FINALLY COMPLETE.
BUT THE PROMISE MADE TO OSHIZU WAS CRUELLY BROKEN.
THE PEOPLE SAID THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF OSHIZU'S SACRIFICE FOR HER SONS' SAKE.

IN THE 10TH YEAR OF TENSHOU (1582), THE SUDDEN DEATH OF NOBUNAGA RESULTED IN THE KIYOSU CONFERENCE, AND KATSUIE GAINED CONTROL OF NAGAHAMA CASTLE IN OUMI. HE TRANSFERRED KATSUTOYO THERE.
DURING THE CONFUSION FROM THE MOVE, THE PROMISE TO MAKE THE BOYS SAMURAI WAS FORGOTTEN.
WHY? YOU PROMISED TO MAKE US SAMURAI IF OUR MOTHER BECAME A HUMAN PILLAR!
DID OUR MOTHER DIE FOR NOTHING?
HOW UNGRATEFUL! DID YOU FORGET THAT IT'S ONLY THANKS TO OUR LORD THAT YOU SURVIVED FOR THIS LONG, WHELPS?
IT'S ALL RIGHT. LET THEM SPEAK.

LORD KATSU-TOYO!
I'M SORRY, BUT I'M GOING TO NAGAHAMA CASTLE. YOU WILL STAY HERE AS SERVANTS FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES.
HOW DARE YOU! YOU BURIED OUR MOTHER ALIVE! OUR MOTHER WILL CURSE YOU!
SHUT UP! BE GRATEFUL THAT I ALLOWED YOU TO SURVIVE AT ALL!
THEN THE PROMISE TO MAKE US SAMURAI...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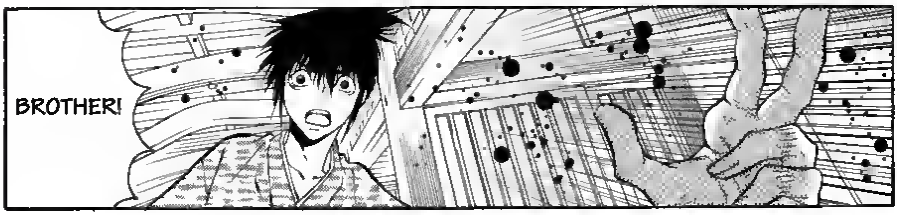

BROTHER!

SLICE

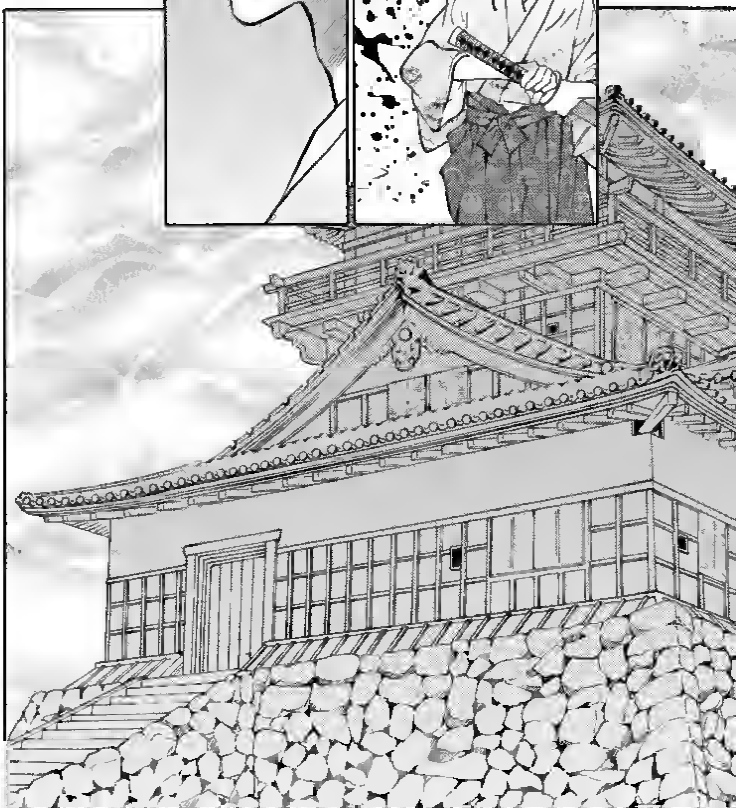
VERY WELL. LET HER CURSE ME.
A GENERAL IN THIS ERA KILLS MANY ENEMIES, AND IS CURSED BY ALL OF THEM.
I AM THE MASTER OF A CASTLE. THE VENGEFUL SPIRIT OF A SINGLE WOMAN DOESN'T FRIGHTEN ME!

SCRAPE
SCRAPE

SHINK

SHLUMP

AT LEAST LET THEM BE BURIED ON THE SAME GROUND AS THEIR MOTHER.
I'M GOING TO NAGAHAMA. BURY THEIR BODIES ON THE GROUNDS OF MARUOKA CASTLE.



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OOOOOAAAAH!
DON'T...
RUMBLE
WHAT?
RUMBLE
DON'T DO IT! YOU CAN'T BECOME A DEMON NOW, OSHIZU!

CURSE YOU! CURSE YOU, SHIBATA KATSUTOYO!
ROAR
I OFFERED MY LIFE TO YOU BECAUSE I THOUGHT YOU WOULD HELP MY SONS!

NAGAHAMA CASTLE
AMAZING! WHAT A SPLENDID CASTLE! SO THIS IS WHERE HISHIBA HIDEYOSHI WAS PROMOTED!
SHIBATA KATSUTOYO, YOU FOOL. YOU CREATED A DEMON IN A RITUAL TO WIN THE FAVOR OF THE GODS.
WHO'S THERE?

INTRUDER! GET HIM, MEN!
A MOTHER CAN BECOME A DEMON. BUT SHE ALSO COULD HAVE BECOME A GOD.
キャアアア

WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
LORD KATSUTOYO! YOU MUST FLEE!

A DEMON HAS COME!
GRAAAAH!
おおおお

FREEZE
THIS IS THE END FOR ME...
FAREWELL, MOTHER.
W-WHY DON'T YOU FINISH ME?
CURSE YOU, KATSUTOYO.
MY HATRED IS ONLY FOR KATSUTOYO!

HOW DARE YOU BREAK THE PROMISE THAT COST ME MY LIFE?!
A ONE-EYED DEMON... ARE YOU THE ONE WHO WAS SACRIFICED?
STOP, OSHIZU.

I AM NO LONGER OSHIZU!
I AM ALL THAT REMAINS OF A POOR MOTHER WHOSE CHILDREN WERE KILLED! I AM A DEMON WHO DEVOURS MEN!
CLANG
BUT NOW THAT YOU'VE BECOME A DEMON, ONIKIRIMARU WILL SLAY YOU!
IF YOU HAD ONLY STUCK TO CURSING INSTEAD OF DEVOURING, I'D HAVE LEFT YOU ALONE.
THAT IS THE WISH FOR WHICH MY OWN MOTHER GAVE UP HER LIFE!

THAT'S RIGHT. ALL MEN HAVE A MOTHER.
THIS MAN, KATSUTOYO, DOES AS WELL. AS DO ALL THE MEN YOU JUST KILLED!
YOUR MOTHER?
JUST LIKE I HAD A MOTHER OF MY OWN!
STAGGER
よろ

MOTHER..
MOTHER..
MOTHER..
YOU KNOW THE PAIN OF LOSING A CHILD BETTER THAN ANYONE, RIGHT?
MOTHER...
MOTHER...
MOTHER...

MY SONS WERE EVERYTHING TO ME! THEY WERE ALL I HAD!
I WOULD HAVE GLADLY GIVEN UP MY LIFE FOR THEM!
MY SOUL HAS BECOME A DEMON. PLEASE SAVE IT.
AAAAAHH!
おおお

MAY MY SONS FIND HAPPINESS IN THE NEXT WORLD.

WE...
WELL DONE! I'LL HIRE YOU AS A SAMURAI! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
WAIT! DON'T GO! WHAT IF ANOTHER DEMON COMES?
THERE ARE NO MORE DEMONS HERE. ONLY THE VENGEFUL SPIRITS OF THE GIRLS SACRIFICED AT THIS CASTLE
OSHIZU... EVEN AFTER YOU BECAME A DEMON, YOU WERE STILL A MOTHER!
WHAT?

NAGAHAMA CASTLE WAS BUILT BY FILLING IN A LAKE. OF COURSE, THE CONSTRUCTION RAN INTO PROBLEMS, AND THE SUPERSTITIOUS HIDEYOSHI SACRIFICED MANY YOUNG GIRLS BY DROWNING THEM IN THE LAKE.

AAH...
AAAH...
LORD KATSU-TOYO! YOU'RE SAFE!
WHEN HE ARRIVED AT NAGAHAMA CASTLE, SHIBATA KATSUTOYO FELL SICK WITH A MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS, AND DIED BEFORE THE BATTLE OF SHIZUGATAKE.
GENERAL OF THE WARRING STATES, HOW FOOLISH TO SAY YOU WERE NOT AFRAID!
LORD KATSU-TOYO?!
CHAPTER 7: THE STRANGE TALE OF THE SACRIFICED MOTHER - COMPLETE